

The Times-Dispatch

Business Office: 916 E. Main Street
 Richmond, Va.
 Daily without Sunday: 4.00 2.00 1.00 .35
 Sunday edition only: 2.00 1.00 .50 .25
 Weekly (Wednesday): 1.00 .50 .25 .15

By Times-Dispatch Carrier Delivery Service in Richmond (and suburbs), Manchester and Petersburg.

Entered January 27, 1903, at Richmond, Va., as second-class matter under act of Congress of March 3, 1879.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1909.

RICHMOND AS A SURGICAL AND MEDICAL CENTRE.

Probably many Richmond people read with some amazement the story printed in yesterday's *Times-Dispatch* of the removal of an open safety pin from the esophagus of a little girl, a great "knifeless" operation performed by a famous Pittsburgh doctor. The most interesting feature of this operation was the introduction of a tube into the child's esophagus and the illumination of the whole passage by a tiny incandescent electric light. It may surprise some of our readers to know that practically this identical operation has been performed more than once here in Richmond. In a communication to *The Times-Dispatch* yesterday, one of the best-known surgeons in this city recalls the feat of a local specialist some years ago in successfully removing an open safety pin from the windpipe of a baby through the mouth; and states that the electric illumination of interior passages for surgical purposes is common enough in this city. Our correspondent adds two general statements which are worth remembering. One is that "there is no surgical work done elsewhere that cannot be done in our own city." The other is that the city of Richmond has an aggregate medical and surgical skill equal to that of any community in the United States. Both of these statements we believe to be emphatically just and true.

Good doctors do not advertise, and their lights are sometimes partially hid under a bushel. Things that happen, and people that live, a thousand miles away often seem more remarkable than things and people around the corner. Not all of us here in Richmond by any means take it in that we have had among us, since the days of Brown-Squard and Hunter McGuire, surgeons and doctors whose mastery skill has won them a national reputation. Through them and through their able, if less widely known, colleagues Richmond has long been one of the greatest hospital centres in the South. Barring Baltimore, there is certainly no Southern city which stands above it here. Richmond has an unusual number of excellent hospitals, and they are constantly filled with people seeking relief from the multifarious ills that flesh is heir to. These people come from all over the State. Many of them come from other States. A very large proportion of them come from North Carolina. In point of location and so forth, Richmond has no especial advantages for a hospital centre. There is nothing in the world to draw these sufferers to us except the general knowledge that we have here doctors and surgeons whose record of brilliant successes is hardly surpassed anywhere.

THE RISING WAVE OF SUICIDE.

The movement of the suicide rate is a kind of gruesome barometer to national life. When the marker registers a low rate on the death-scale, contentment must be widespread, satisfaction with life must be general, and prosperity must be deep-seated. When, on the other hand, the number of suicides is great, there must be something radically wrong. To the average man life is too sweet to be cast away, unless its conditions have become unnaturally bitter.

Judged by this standard, obscure causes are operating to breed discontent in America. At least, figures recently tabulated in the *Insurance Spectator* by Frederick L. Hoffman indicate a most alarming increase in suicides. In 1894 the suicide rate per 100,000 in thirty-five selected American cities was sixteen, while last year, in the same cities, it was almost twenty-two. With a few exceptions, every year in the last fifteen has shown an increase in the number of those who ended their lives by self-murder. The absolute increase is even more distressing. Where in 1904 1,951 men and women ended it all with pistol, poison or the like, no less than 3,553 were driven to the same last desperateness in 1908.

Mr. Hoffman's table contains much meat for the student of social conditions. Among other things, it shows a greater suicide rate in large cities than in cities under 50,000 inhabitants. For the 124 men per 100,000 who commit self-murder in the latter class of cities, 15.4 destroy themselves in the former class. In the same way it is notable that the suicide rate in Northern cities is greater than in the South, while the rate in the West is almost double that of the South. In Charleston, S. C., for instance, the rate is not a third of what it is in New York, while Baltimore bears about the same ratio to San Francisco. Oakland, Cal., heads the gloomy list, with more than six suicides per 1,000 inhabitants each year. It is observed, also, that suicide is most frequent among the educated classes. Army officers and bankers head the list.

In a complex society such as ours it

is perhaps useless to look for general causes for growing suicide tendencies beyond that discontent and remorse which naturally follow mispent careers, crime, misfits in life and domestic purgatory. But the economic effect of increased suicides is looming large. One great insurance company, which plumed itself upon having no suicide clause in its policy, was forced to incorporate such an annual clause last year. The loss was too great and the temptation to the policy-holder was too menacing.

It is hard to form a hopeful view of American life from such figures as these. A Browning in the *Parliamentary* might passionately voice the hope that all would end well at the last. But the average observer of American life to-day must stand somewhat oppressed before this rising wave of self-destruction.

THE CASE OF NAMYO BESSHO.

Decision in the curious case of Namyo Bessho, argued here yesterday before the United States Circuit Court of Appeals, will be awaited with some interest. Bessho, a Japanese apparently of education and good parts, desires to become an American citizen. His application has been rejected by the inferior court because of the provision in the United States revised statute which gives the right to citizenship only to "all white persons and those of African descent who are of good moral character." But Bessho has served an enlistment in the United States Navy and has carried his claim to the higher court on the ground of an act of Congress "conferring special privileges upon those who have served in the water." What the appellate court must determine in this case, it would seem, is whether the special privileges here conferred were meant to go back of the inhibition of the statute.

But the case of course opens up a much bigger reach than that. It raises the point as to the general wisdom shown in bestowing citizenship upon the African alone of all colored races. We note that the *Charleston News and Courier* grows somewhat savage on this point. "No people in the world's history," it says, "have proved themselves to be so utterly unworthy of the right of suffrage as the African." It points out that under the present law "a Hotentot cannibal would have no trouble in transferring his allegiance from a savage chief to the United States, but a highly educated Japanese, Chinaman or Turk would be denied the privilege of citizenship." It summarizes thus: "In other words, that race which of all others has proved to be most worthless is the one race which our government declares is peculiarly fitted to produce citizens."

This, obviously, is an extreme statement of the case. Certainly the government did not deliberately pick out the African race, among all colored races, as the "peculiarly fitted" for citizenship. It simply recognized conditions and hard facts as they existed. If there had been 10,000,000 Japanese here and only a handful of negroes, the revised statutes would assuredly have admitted Japanese and whites to citizenship, while excluding those "of African descent." The granting of citizens' privileges to negroes was a thing quite apart from the question of general national policy toward non-Caucasian aliens. But it is true that this discriminative attitude toward the black race must seek the historical argument for its defense and cannot be justified on logical grounds. We don't believe that any large number of Oriental-Americans is desired by the majority of our citizens. But it remains an evident fact that the average Japanese in this country is on a totally different plane from the average negro, and is intellectually far better qualified to exercise the rights of citizenship. We may best explain such an irrationality by saying that the sheer dynamic force of history knocked out our lawmakers here, but that after that they were resolved to draw a rigid color-line.

BRYAN AND PROHIBITION.

It is hard to believe that Mr. Bryan intends to push forward prohibition as his paramount issue for 1909-1912, despite some evidence in that direction in last week's *Commoner*, and the rumors of a crescendo series of articles to follow. The report is that he means to ally himself now with the Anti-Saloon powers in Nebraska, and has in that connection a favorable eye fixed on Elmer J. Burkett's seat in the United States Senate. How far the dry backing would be politically valuable in a Nebraska State campaign we shall not undertake to estimate. But should this "keynote" editorial the other day really prove the first step in an attempt to force the marriage of the Democratic and Prohibition parties in 1912, we should say that Mr. Bryan had made the greatest blunder of his lifetime.

In a State-wide prohibition election where local action has long held sway, the Anti-Saloon League counts strongly on the support of the counties or other option units which have already gone dry. Having no local interest in the matter, these communities are usually quite willing to fasten on other and usually very reluctant communities the reforms which they themselves have thought it wise to adopt. If prohibition should be made a live national issue, probably it is true that the same influences would work, and that the States now dry would be likely to cast their electoral votes on the dry side of the fence. But the fact is that there are very few dry States in this country. The fact is that even in these dry States there is a very large minority which distrusts prohibition as a half-baked amateur reform which

cannot possibly make good under existing conditions. The fact is that there is a very large number of States in which anti-prohibition sentiment is strongly developed, firmly imbedded, in the ascendancy, and quite likely to remain each of these things.

In short, it is not easy to see how any astute and thoroughly tried politician could possibly figure out prohibition as a winning national issue. It is of course the ideal issue for spitting the Democratic party in two. Yet it is not for either of these reasons that we should consider any attempt from Mr. Bryan to paramountize it as the prelude to his positively last farewell performance. It is the flashing insight which such a step would give into the way his own mind works and has been working all along. Prohibition, whether wise or not, is no novel nostrum, like bank deposit guaranty. It has been right there all the time. The saloon is no more "a menace to the home and the State" now than it was in 1890 or 1900. In fact, we should say that it is distinctly less a menace, since regulations have everywhere been tightened with good results, and a fear of worse things to come has frightened the saloonists into more or less voluntary reforms. In years gone by Mr. Bryan did not give his first column, page one, to lambasting the saloon. Yet the one signal difference in the fight against the open drinking-places then and now is that the anti sentiment has grown much more formidable. In fact, it has passed from a somewhat dreamy theory into a practical political weapon of considerable power. Should the favored front page space now be surrendered to it, only the hopelessly fatigued could dismiss the coincidence as a mere trivial accident. Others would be obliged to believe that the impulse behind the new alliance is nothing more than restless ambition, ever casting about for a new political step-ladder. Whether Mr. Bryan really means to try to make a national issue of prohibition at the expense of the Democratic party we do not know. But should he make the experiment, we believe that so bold a display of besetting weakness would be a little strong for even his staunchest and most open-minded admirers to stomach.

When British statesmen have an evening off and nothing much to do, they usually go out in front of the house and warn the pees.

Politics makes strange bed-fellows, but election day usually sets the alarm clock going.

"President Zelaya," says the stern *Philadelphia Press*, "has a black record of indifference to international obligations, cruelty in administration, brutality toward prisoners, immorality and depravity." A black record indeed. But we challenge the *Press* to deny that that is Zelaya's only fault.

Our New York corps of little research workers informs us that William Loeb, Jr., is now disappointing his enemies at the rate of 89 per cent.

Sir Maurice William Ernest de Bunsen is said to be slated to succeed Mr. Bryce in Washington. We venture the prediction that Sir Maurice, etc., will have the misfortune of a time succeeding better than Mr. Bryce.

For the benefit of out-of-town visitors, we venture to say that the Richmond winters usually begin about Jan. 1 and end Jan. 17 at 6:30 P. M.

When making up a little list of the hardihood of history, let nobody overlook our esteemed contemporary, the Standard Oil Company.

"Lucky Baldwin Not So Rich," says the *Healing*. According to Mr. Currier that is just the thing to have entitled him to be known as Lucky Baldwin.

At the chief Thanksgiving Day celebration in Washington, earnest prayers were offered up for Congress. Those inclined to scoff should remember that they are told about the prayers of the righteous availing much and about the faith which can remove mountains.

The weathermen of New York could not beat it in ten throws.

The oval piskin might be described as one whose future was looking a thought shaky at the moment.

There is no occasion for surprise in the report that Castilane was soon to marry. If Helio could do that we should say that anybody could.

And the worst of it is that the turkey family must at once begin preparing to go through another butchery one year from date.

Any one who wants to know how to gather in troubles by the peck might find it worth while to take a correspondence course from old Mr. Zelaya.

Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt will now repeat to Oyster Bay, while she uses interesting, but which will hardly conjure back the old celebrity in the date-lines.

72,000 Marriages a Day.

According to a provisional estimate made by the Census Bureau shortly after midnight last night there were more than 72,000 marriages in the United States yesterday. In Chicago alone there were 1,106, and in the five boroughs of New York there were 1,237. The American consul along the Canadian and Mexican frontiers report that nearly 600 couples eloped across the borders and were married in Toronto, Ottawa, Ciudad Juarez, Matamoros and other hazyen cities. Thanksgiving Day, indeed, is the first of the wedding days. Folks who would not think of marrying at any other time succumb to its romantic atmosphere and the force of mental suggestion.

Food for seers and savants! A chance for prophets and neomancers! Out of the past, perhaps, some dim hint of the things the future has in store may be brought forth. What has been the history of the 64,000 marriages begun so auspiciously on Thanksgiving day, 1904? We refuse to venture upon an answer. Go ask the 9,000 husbands whose backs have been bowed by the endless bringing up of heavy scuttles of coal. Go ask the 6,000 whose brows have been slanted back by rolling-pins. Go ask the 7,000 whose bodies have been made to shiver by the seizure and commandment that milliners might live in luxury and cosmetic manufacturers might die a tale to tell.—Baltimore Sun.

ART ADVISER OF MANY ROYALTIES

Guy Laking, Keeper of King's Armory, Studies American Collections.

JUSTICE A VICOMTE

Man Who "Grilled" Mme. Steinhell Is Wealthy and Great Art Expert.

BY LA MARQUISE DE FONTENAY.

GUY LAKING, who is now in the art collection, is not only the keeper of the King's armory and a valued member of the French art collections, but also a member of the firm of Christie, which enjoys international fame as having undertaken the sale by auction of all the most celebrated collections of art that have come into the market during the last fifty years or more. His academic career was not a success, for it is on record that he was requested to leave Westminster School at the age of sixteen, owing to his avowed habit of truancy. But he has been himself from his studies. It was in order to frequent the salerooms of the Louvre and of the Galleries as they were of the Faures. Indeed, it was just because he was very fond of the Louvre that he played such animosity against the woman whom he regarded as the cause of the shocking death of the President and of the sorrow added to the bereavement of Mme. Faure and of her daughter, his animosity being tempered, however, by the desire to avenge everything in the deliberations of the trial that could affect the memory of the President or revive the scandal of his death.

The Vicomte de Valles, despite the grays of his beard, is young-looking and alert for all his fifty-six years, and I may add that the little which he bears is perfectly authentic, as befits a grandson of the d'Hozières, who were the Gallic count, Earl of St. Bernard Burke, the founder of "Burke's Peerage," only they were more reliable.

Bookkeeper Knighted.

Sir Frederick Macmillan, who has just been knighted by the King, in recognition of his philanthropic services as president of the National Hospital for Paralysis and Epilepsy, is the head of the great publishing house of

Macmillan, and descended in a direct line from the celebrated John Macmillan, who at the beginning of the eighteenth century founded the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland, after a stubborn and determined struggle with the authorities. The founder of the publishing house, the late Daniel Macmillan, father of Sir Frederick, played a good deal of the old Covenant spirit of religion, and it was upon this religious spirit that he may be said to have built up the firm, for when he started out in business for himself it was in the conviction that educational literature needed to be raised to a higher level, and he made it his aim to induce the most eminent men he could find to set themselves to the task of writing elementary textbooks. The result of this bent of mind has been the publication by the Macmillans of some of the most valuable educational works. Daniel Macmillan was the son of a farmer of Arran, on the west coast of Scotland, served an apprenticeship as assistant to a book-seller at Glasgow, then made his way to London, and he first started out as a bookseller, but he had a connection of immense assistance, not only by reason of the backing which he received from the university itself, but also from the Barclays and other bankers, whose acquaintance he had made when they were young.

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